

Joint Press statement

For Immediate release

16th June 2014

TO HIS EXCELLENCY THE PRESIDENT: CALL FOR ACCOUNTABLE LEADERSHIP ON OUR COUNTRY'S SAFETY AND SECURITY

We, the undersigned organisations relay our heartfelt condolences to the families of the victims and the people of Lamu County at large following Sunday night attack in Mpeketoni that has left over 48 civilians and security agents dead, injured many more and has occasioned massive destruction of property. Our continued vulnerability as a country to these attacks is totally unacceptable.

It is only this past week that the Cabinet Secretary for finance presented the budget for 2014/15 that has been lauded as being transformative and sets Kenya on the path of political stability, economic growth and development. Infact, in that budget the central role of the security sector in bringing about the envisaged transformation is evidenced by the allocation of Ksh 90.7 billion which is 8% of the budget.

Historically, the security sector has been receiving the lion share of public resources ostensibly to keep us safe and secure. The country is spiralling from one security crisis to the next. In September 2013, we witnessed the attack on the Westage Mall attributed to terrorism. Close on the heels of it were several attacks in Northern Kenya, Nairobi and Mombasa. Similarly, we have continued to experience a wave of unresolved killings of religious leaders and the faithful. In all these instances, not much progress has been made in bringing the culprits to book.

This calls to question the effectiveness of the government's response including Operation Usalama Watch. State response to the crisis of insecurity is *ad hoc* and the state has settled into a pattern of emergency meetings, issuance of rhetorical statements on how they are in charge and in operations that violate human rights.

One of the key objectives of the Kenya Defence Forces deployment to Somalia was to eliminate the threat of terrorism. One would therefore expect that the border area in Lamu has been secured by Kenyan forces to deter any incursion by terrorist elements. It is thus perplexing that an attack of yesterday's magnitude in Mpeketoni could occur despite assurance by KDF that they have successfully subdued insurgent forces in Southern Somalia which borders Lamu.

We are therefore calling upon the President as the Commander in Chief of the armed forces and the custodian of the sovereignty of the Kenyan people to take measures to hold to account senior officers in the security sector, including terminating their services.

The KNCHR in partnership with the undersigned organisations calls upon the Minister of National Coordination and Interior to resign from his position as a sign of political responsibility for the security lapses.

We shall also be presenting a petition to the National Assembly under Article 95 (2) of the constitution to:

1. Set up a public inquiry into the recent security lapses in the Country. We are compelled to request the National Assembly to step in and take leadership in such an inquiry in view of the continuing failure of the President to set up a Commission of Inquiry into the Westgate attack which he had promised.
2. As part of that inquiry, the National Assembly must Initiate a process to determine the suitability and competence of the office holders of the following dockets; Inspector General, Director of the National Intelligence Service and Director of Criminal Investigations Department, as it is quite clear that their continued tenure of office is untenable to the safety and security of the republic.
3. Parliament makes recommendations on the underlying causes of insecurity and proposes measures to be taken to respond to these with a clear implementation mechanism.

Signed

Kenya National Commission on Human Rights

Independent Medico Legal Unit

Kenya Human Rights Commission

International Commission of Jurists-Kenya

FIDA-Kenya

National Coalition of Human Rights Defenders